2nd Seneca Fest draws huge crowd

BY ANDREW MOORE
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — The city of Seneca's fifth annual Memorial Day Weekend event was an overwhelming success, city officials said Tuesday.

Seneca Fest began its existence as "Meet and 3," so named because it featured three events: a barbecue cook-off, a vintage car show and an arts event on Ram Cat Alley. The 2011 version of the event was the second under the Seneca Fest moniker, and drew massive crowds to the city's Norton-Thompson Park.

"It turned out great," Recreation Director Rick Lacey said. "I couldn't have asked for it to be any better. It was more people than we've ever had. There were about 20,000 people watching the concert Saturday. There was not one other spot to sit. And probably another 3,000 standing out in the road watching it."

Lacey said he received an e-mail from Brian Howe, rocker of Bad Company fame and the headliner

SEE CROWD, PAGE A5



Officials said Tuesday that Seneca Fest brought the biggest crowd ever seen at a city event.

FOR THE JOURNAL

CROWD: 'I attribute a lot of our success to the media,' Alexander said

FROM PAGE A1

of the event, applauding the "backline," or sound instrumentation behind the act, that the city provided.

"We had a small issue with our tickets. This was the first time that all the food vendors took tickets instead of cash, and it's something we'll get worked out," Lacey said. "It's our first time, and we'll just have to tweak it. We just didn't have enough ticket booths."

Mayor Dan Alexander said that all facets of the event, which was funded by sponsors and hospitality and accommodations tax money, were well-attended.

"I really feel like we took it to a higher level this weekend. The weather was perfect, the entertainment was great and it was the largest crowd we've ever had at a Seneca event," Alexander said.

He attributed Seneca Fest's record attendance to Events Coordinator Riley Johnson's advertising efforts through radio, television and newspaper.

"Weather was a factor for the crowd, but Riley did an excellent job of getting the word out. It just shows the advantages of advertising," Alexander said. "I attribute a lot of our success to the media getting the word out about what's going on in Seneca.

We had a lot of people coming here and spending money in the community. That's what we're trying to do — letting more people know about Seneca, and bringing them here."

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